1: Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1920)1932
FE11 Tallensi FE11

bone of the old Native Administration, to be superseded and pushed aside by ambitious and often unscrupulous upstarts who bid for these minor posts before the Chief in whose patronage they lie; the almost inevitable result is that, having obtained the office, they are induced to regard it chiefly as a means of enabling them to recoup themselves for the expenses which they have incurred in securing the post.

The Family Compounds: These are round, flat-roofed, scattered, and, as far as I could see, in other respects similar to those already described.

The Ten'dan': Among the Talense an investigation into the former status and rights of this official resulted in the confirmation of the answers already given to similar enquiries made elsewhere. The following notes may therefore be regarded as supplementary to what has previously been written concerning these individuals, and as being, for the main part, applicable to *Ten'dama* in general, and not only among the Talense.

Duties of Ten'dan': (*a*) He takes a certain part in funeral customs; this will be dealt with under that heading. (*b*) He purifies the land from defilement of blood. 'The Earth does not wish any one to die, except God's death (*Yin-ku*); *kun kpemere*, a violent death, is a taboo of the land (*tey*), so if any one fights and spills blood on the land, it has to be purified (*man tey*). The one who causes the wound has to bring a fowl and a goat, if a person was actually killed, and a cow for the Chief. The sacrifice is made at the compound of the *Ten'dan'*, not where the blood fell. I will assemble all my people and send to tell the Chief that I am purifying the land. If those who had shed the blood were from the Chief's compound, he will send representatives, not otherwise. If the guilty person refuses to purify the land, I will speak and he will die. Even if I do not speak, the land will fight him, that is, permit a snake to bite him or give him head-ache or belly-ache.'

Words Spoken at the Ceremony: 'I will call my father and say: "Listen, they fight on your land, and give head wounds, and blood comes forth. Blood flowed and wet you, so they have brought flour, fowls, and a goat to give you." When I have spoken thus, I make the sacrifice on a heap of soil which I scrape together.'

If any one raises the war cry *kab tagulk* (Nankane, *kasega*) without a cause, he must sacrifice to the land. If any one sells another person, he must purify the land, giving a cow or sheep. 'The land owns the people, that is why a sacrifice is made to her.'

Purification of the Land when Some One is Sold: When a person sells

[The sections of the source containing this material were not processed.--Analyst]

1: Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1920)1932
FE11 Tallensi FE11
NAMNAM

793 he would ask the *Ten'dan*' and be given a place to build, or a place to farm. After the harvest of the early millet, they would send millet to give "water" to the groves, and so too, after the corn harvest. If [783] blood came from any one, except from the nose, and fell upon the land, the *Ten'dan*' had to purify it. If Chiefs sold any man in exchange for [567] cattle, the *Ten'dan* was given one to give to the land, but when people were sold in a time of famine in exchange for food it was not customary to give anything, but the land would be angry and kill a member of that family who had sold their kinsman, even (extending its vengeance) to a member of their daughter's family who had married far away. [772] The land is a female and "above" is a male. When I sacrifice I call upon my father to "reach" his father who will "reach" the grove. Birth, crops, the getting of wives, good sleep, depend upon the land, ●[621] who tells *Wen* (God). When two people were about to fight, and the *Ten'dan*' went to stop them, he would lay down his staff between them and no man might shoot arrows over that. The staff is a corn stalk. Any one who disregarded that would die. *Tobeg*' and *taku*[1] have not anything to do with the *Ten'dan*'.

The Position of the Ten'dan' in Cases of Adultery, Theft, Murder, and Suicide.

684 *Adultery*: 'The head of the section settled such cases; it was not 624 formerly a Chief's concern.'

Theft: 'In case of theft, the thief, if caught, would be taken to 685 the one who "owned" (i.e. was responsible for) him, who would 624 *settle* the matter. If the parties could not agree, the matter was taken to the head of the section, who would take it if necessary to [777] the Chief. Since Europeans came we have the *Kambon-nab*'.'[2]

Murder: 'If a man from Nangoot was killed (murdered?) by a man 622 from (say) Pelino, and the slayer was caught, he would be killed by 793 those who chased him. Afterwards, the Pelino people would bring 629 cows, and the people of Nangoot also, and give to the Chief who would then give some to the *Ten'dan*', keeping the remainder to purify his [783] skins. There is a hole below the skin on which a Chief sits for the blood to flow. The family who had had a member murdered did not receive anything. The Pelino people and the Nangoot people concerned would mix the flour and water which each will bring and make peace. Were the Pelino man, in such a case, to escape, and if the

[1] See Chapter XXVIII.

[2] According to the Chief, these officials were part of the old administration.

[1] [Nankanse concepts apply to persons who have directly and indirectly committed a murder — Analyst.]

1: Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1920)1932
FE11 Tallensi FE11
NAMNAM

622 Nangoot people wished to make war on them, the *Ten'dan'* would stop
793 them. The murderer will thus escape. The head Chief had not any
628 power to tell the *Kambon-nab'* of the murderer's *teya* to hand him over, but he would bring cows and purify the land.

622 'When murderer and murdered man were from the same *teya* or
793 same section, the murderer was not tried or killed, but he would have to leave the town. If he remained behind, and heard the funeral custom of his victim, or if he ate any food or drank any water in which the dead man's cloth had been dipped, he would die. His family would bring a cow, sheep, and goat to the Chief. The cow was handed to the *Ten'dan'*, who gave it to the land, saying, "A young rascal has destroyed, and they have brought their gifts, that I may receive and give you, that you may hide the sin, and that people may sleep (lit. that sleep may sleep), the corn bloom, child-bearing continue, and marriages be celebrated".

793 'A *Ten'dan'* was not allowed to ask the land to punish any one.[1] He
●627 could not do so; the land must not hate any one, but love all men alike, even murderers. The murderer would leave with his wife and family and never return. He might go to his in-laws; if he were ever to return, he would die, the *tobog'* of the murdered man would kill him.'[2]

793 *Suicide* (*Ko-fo-meya*): 'The family of the suicide took a cow, a sheep,
762 and a goat and handed them to the Chief, who gave the cow to the
782 *Ten'dan'* for the land. He sacrificed it, saying: "A man has made heart (i.e. got angry) and killed himself; that is finished, but a wife remains, a boy remains, let them sleep well; do not let this same thing return".
[761] A suicide had already spoken before birth; he had made a vow, he would die as a man, *buda kum*.'[3]

622 All important matters were discussed by the Chief, *Ten'dan'*, and
624 793 section-heads.

793 *Succession to Ten'dan'*: 'When a *Ten'dan'* died, and while his funeral
787 custom was being made, they called a *bay* (soothsayer), meeting at the *zoy* hut, outside the compound, and, in the presence of the Elders, but not of the Chief, consulted and selected a new *Ten'dan'*. Any one might become *Ten'dan'* except any member of the Chief's family. A brother might succeed a brother.'[4]

[1] But see p. 376.

[2] There seems here a clear distinction between murdering or killing a clansman and a stranger.

[3] A natural death is often known as *bum pok kum* (a woman's death).

[4] This is not so among the Nankanse.

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

587 When, some forty years ago, a Tongo man married a Zoo widow and his
X618 son was shot dead in revenge by a Zoo man, the Chief of Tongo forbade
a raid of retaliation. It was, my informants said, a just vengeance since
[682] 'we don't marry the widows of Zoo people'.

Again, it would be a serious breach of solidarity for a member of one of
X618 the sub-clans to abduct the wife of a member of any other, and I have
● 627 never heard of such a case. Warfare between them is inconceivable, so
the injured group would have to rely upon moral pressure through the
chief and elders of the offender's community. But these measures would
undoubtedly succeed, even in these days when rebellious young men can
flee to foreign lands.

X618 This is likewise the widest extension of a restriction which holds with
587 greatest force for the segments of a maximal lineage belonging to the
same sub-clan, e.g. for the segments of Tongo *inter se*. In a lesser degree
it applies also to ex-wives. A man who marries the former wife of another,
even if the marriage was severed for just and accepted reasons, incurs the
hostility of the first husband's entire lineage both towards himself per-
sonally and towards his clansmen as a group. Reprisals will be taken when
an opportunity occurs. When the parties are clansmen, feelings about such
acts become very bitter, and the more so the closer the tie. Marriages of
this kind take place from time to time, producing conflicts and reprisals
but not disruption of clanship ties.

X618 Another proof of kinship (*mabiirət*) usually cited by the natives is that
721 warfare between the four sub-clans was forbidden. They were allies in
war in the old days. They did not all come to one another's help, nor
were they each other's sole allies. But they could call upon one another's
assistance in the name of kinship. The recollections of the oldest men go
back no farther than the time of their grandparents, four or five genera-
tions ago. They tell of ancient fights in which Tongo, Sie, and Yaməlag
supported one another; but Biuk, it seems, maintained an isolationist
policy in the wars and feuds of its Tale kinsmen. The greatest war still
remembered in tale and anecdote occurred forty or fifty years ago.
Yaməlag became involved in it; and when Ba'ari raised the war-cry
against Yaməlag, Sie and Tongo attacked Ba'ari on the flanks.

Mosuor biis: a Maximal Lineage

X618 These four branches of Mosuor's agnatic posterity (*tu'u*) constitute
what appears to be a single, dispersed clan—the only clan of this type in
Taleland; more accurately, it is a maximal lineage—the most inclusive
agnatic lineage to which any descendant of Mosuor in the male line (i.e.
any member of the four branches) can belong. In the eyes of the natives
an important qualification is that the four branches are of equal status
though graded in seniority. Tongo is the most senior because it remained
in possession of the original home of the clan—'*ti waabi daboog*, the
ancient home-site of all of us', they say—and has retained the custody of
Mosuor's grave and *boyar*, the shrine which symbolizes the perpetuity,
X618 identity, and common ancestry of the entire maximal lineage. Yaməlag,
769 Sie, and Biuk follow in that order; but they no longer participate in
sacrifices to Mosuor. Each of them has its own ancestral *boyar*, enshrining

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

577 784 social setting they identify Namoo communities by contraposition with non-Namoo neighbours. The phrase 'we of the Mampuru stock' merely labels a category of clans. It becomes a coefficient of conduct for the individual within the context of clanship, local, and community ties.

613 428 627 The dispute over the succession to the custody of the shrine (*bɔyar*) of the founding ancestor of Bɔyada biis at Tongo was a case in point. Saŋgbɔŋ, the son of the deceased custodian, who had been head of Yiyaam biis, one major segment of the lineage, refused to hand the shrine over to Tinta'alam, the oldest living member of the whole lineage. He alleged that the latter's segment (Yidaan biis) were 'sister's children', that is, an attached lineage descended from a Sii man. All the men of Yidaan biis rallied unanimously around Tinta'alam, angry and resentful at this slur on their status. 'If we don't get the *bɔyar*', they explained, 'people will scoff at us, saying that we are the descendants of a slave' (i.e. not the authentic progeny of Mosuor).

The case was argued, with an acrimony which was hard to conceal, before the chief. Saŋgbɔŋ contended that Yidaan biis could not be debarred from taking part in sacrifices to the shrine of Bɔyada, but, as an attached lineage, they had no right to its custody. Tinta'alam, speaking for the whole segment of Yidaan biis, denied this story as a pack of lies, but his opponent refused to abandon his position. At length the chief put the decisive question to the elders who were present. 'What', he asked, 'do the people of Sii taboo?' 'The tortoise (*pakur*), the water tortoise (*miey*), and the crocodile (*baŋ*)', said one of the elders, 'and they dress their dead in a sheepskin loin-cover (*ba suona pchug*), and do not taboo the fowl.' 'And what about you Namoos?' queried the chief. 'Do you avoid the fowl, or do you not? Do you put a sheepskin loin-cover on the dead?' The elders answered this rhetorical question, 'Of course we taboo the fowl! And we use a goatskin for the dead. When Talis slaughter the sheep to gird their dead we would not even touch the meat.' 'Now,' continued the chief, 'if Yidaan had come to live here with his mother's brother as an acknowledged son of a Sii man, would he have discarded his forefathers' taboos?' 'Neither he nor his descendants', exclaimed the elders with one voice; 'if they had done so they would suffer for it, they would all die out.' And an attached lineage which Saŋgbɔŋ had adduced in support of his case was quoted in proof; for they still retain the taboos of the Talis because their founder had been legitimately and ritually a member of a Talis clan. Moreover, there was the case of Puliebɔr yidem, the Tongo lineage living at Gorogo, who keep their Namoo taboos. There was a time when they lost many members through death in quick succession, and diviners revealed that this was a retribution for trying to participate in the initiation cult of their Talis kin. The tone and attitude of the elders showed impressively the moral importance to the natives of these taboos. It was common knowledge, they said, that Tinta'alam and all the members of his segment observe the Namoo taboos. Saŋgbɔŋ's story was palpably false. However, to make the decision conclusive and to save it from rankling it was left to an oracle. [787] A fowl was slaughtered with an invocation to the ancestors and the posture in which it died showed which of the disputants was in the right.

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

No one was surprised when Tinta'alam gained the verdict. Thus the ancestors themselves vouched for the legitimate status of Yidaan biis.

Other Namoo Clans

The most important of the Namoo clans that come within the political orbit of Tongo, though not related to it by ties of clanship, is the contiguous clan of Zoo. A number of Tongo families live on Zoo land, which was not so densely populated as Tongo 50 or 60 years ago and could therefore accommodate some of its overflow population. In the same way, a number of Zoo families have overflowed into the neighbouring locality of Gbambee, where they live among Tongo people. These ecological adjustments are facilitated, though not solely determined, by the structural ties between Zoo and Tongo, and by the fact that both are Namoo settlements. Ten out of the thirty-nine homesteads at Zoo belong to Tongo people, and they are members of all but one of the major segments of Tongo. By contrast, Tongo people are reluctant to move out to vacant parts of Zubiuŋ, where the people, though their neighbours and cognatic kinsfolk, are Talis in their ritual beliefs and practices. In recent years only one Tongo man has done this as a temporary measure.

The people of Zoo (Zoodɛm) comprise two maximal lineages. One of these, Zoo proper, is a maximal lineage of three segments, to one of which is attached a 'sister's son's' lineage. Their founding ancestor, Yikpɛmdaan, is said to have been a kinsman (*mabii*) of Mosuor, whom he accompanied from Mampurugu. As Zoodɛm marry any of the descendants of Mosuor, the fiction of original kinship (*mabiirɔt*) here emphasizes the cultural and political solidarity of the two groups, not a genealogical connexion.

Living side by side with Zoodɛm proper (Yikpɛmdaan biis) is another maximal lineage known as Zoo-Yiraaŋdɛm. These two maximal lineages exclude one another from the cults of their respective founding ancestors and from the ritual observances connected with them. Indeed, Zoo-Yiraaŋdɛm are affiliated to the Talis by ritual observance and cult. Nevertheless, Zoodɛm proper and Zoo-Yiraaŋdɛm have all the ties of clanship that hold between constituent lineages of the same clan who consider themselves to be *sunzɔp*. The explanation they give is that 'it is because we live together side by side (*tin kab ziin ni taaba la zugu*)'. Here clanship is attributed to local coalescence. These clanship ties are shown in all ceremonial matters that concern either of the lineages as well as in their co-operative enterprises. Though they do not take part in the esoteric ritual of one another's funeral ceremonies, they act as *sunzɔp* to one another in the public and exoteric phases of the ceremonies. If a party of Zoodɛm proper set out to pay their respects to a deceased relative-in-law, they will always be supported by some young men from Zoo-Yiraaŋdɛm; and if a Zoo-Yiraaŋ man is summoned to take a working party to help his father-in-law, he will always be accompanied by a few young men of the other lineage.

Zoo-Yiraaŋ is linked by ties of clanship to one of the component maximal lineages of Zubiuŋ.[1] Zoodɛm proper have no ties of clanship with Zubiuŋ or with any other clan. Yet they are often described as 'our

[1] See ch. VI.

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

[618] tendaanaship and in other religious cults. Each segment has its own tendaana, the Gbizug tendaana being the senior of the two, and in addition the Gbeogdem have the cult of the External *Bɔyar*, like Zubiuŋ and the Hill Talis, whereas the Gbizugdem do not participate in this cult. This cleavage comes into operation also in the political and jural relations of the two segments, so that in very many situations Gbeog emerges as an independent settlement.

Both segments have ties of clanship with Soog, the Talis clan sandwiched between Tongo and Wakii. But there is an additional bond between Gbeog and Soog, which is not shared by Gbizug, for one-half of Gbeog is associated with Soog in a common cult of an External *Bɔyar*, in the same way as the three sections of Zubiuŋ are associated in the cult of their External *Bɔyar*, Duunkpalɔg. The other half of Gbeog has a separate External *Bɔyar*. Gbizug has ties of clanship also with Degal, the Tɛnzugu clan, in virtue of the alleged 'brotherhood' of the four primordial tendaanas. Yet Wakii and Ka'ar, the clans sprung from the other two primordial tendaanas, are merely the *sunzɔp*-by-courtesy of Gbizug, though both, and especially Wakii, have closer spatial, jural, and ritual relations with it than Degal has.

[608] Soogdem have no ties of clanship with Zubiuŋ, but regard them as *sunzɔp*-by-courtesy. They are linked by a ritual relationship which comes into effect whenever a Zubiuŋ tendaana dies. There was for a long time an estrangement between the two clans, because some years ago a Zubiuŋ youth married the ex-wife of a Soog man. A ceremonial reconciliation [627] under somewhat dramatic circumstances took place recently when ritual necessity compelled the elders of the offender's lineage to send a deputation to beg the pardon of the Soog elders. Apart from this intermittent and very limited ritual collaboration, the clanship-by-courtesy of Soog and Zubiuŋ is very weak. One of the standing jokes in Zubiuŋ concerned two [735] of the lineage heads of Soog. These two old men are notoriously poor through bodily infirmity, and therefore make use of every opportunity of getting free food or drink. Thus, whenever there is a funeral at Zubiuŋ they appear as representatives of their clan to claim their share of beer and meat as *sunzɔp*-by-courtesy; but Zubiuŋdem have long ceased to go to Soog funerals.

From Ba'ari the mesh of clan linkages continues across the dialectal boundary with the Gorisi. Ba'at-Sakpar has clanship ties with Sanaab biis, a section of Bolɔga. 'They are our kinsmen', said the Ba'at-Sakpar tendaana-elect, 'even though they have become Gorisi.' Another Bolɔga section are similarly related to Ba'at-Lakum yiri. Ba'at-Guŋ, on the other hand, have ties of clanship with Tamboog on Tɛnzugu, and Ba'at-Dun biis have ties of clanship with Samiit on Tɛnzugu. Yayazuor and Gbee are *sunzɔp*-by-courtesy to all sections of Ba'ari.

The internal constitution of Ba'ari is interesting, in that the whole clan is grouped around Ba'at-Sakpar. Thus, Ba'at-Lakum yiri has the status of an attached lineage of Sakpar. Their founding ancestor was said to have been a sororal nephew of Sakpar, begotten by a Zubiuŋ man—hence also their ties with Zubiuŋ; and Ba'at-Guŋ is similarly an attached lineage of Lakum yiri. Being related to Sakpar by a remove, Guŋ is allowed to

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

other non-Namoos. It is recognized by all Tallensi that these taboos are on a par with the fowl taboo of the Namoos, though they have, in many respects, a more complex meaning. Among both groups of clans, no doubt because totemic taboos are so clear-cut and categorical, it is considered unthinkable for an adult in full command of his faculties to violate (*galəm*) a totemic taboo deliberately. The sanctions for an accidental breach are the same in both groups, but this is an extremely rare occurrence. It is enough to see the spontaneous repugnance of small children to unaccustomed or forbidden food to understand why they keep totemic taboos so conscientiously. A man never allows a prohibited animal into his house; and women married to men who may eat animals forbidden to themselves take scrupulous care to avoid a possible lapse. His totemic taboos appear to the individual as a simple, unequivocal moral precept.

Talis state their totemic avoidances in the form: 'We do not eat (*ti pu ɔbət*) or we taboo (*kih*) such and such an animal', meaning a particular species of animal. They explain that these avoidances are obligatory on a person through the fact of his being born a member of a certain maximal lineage; they are obligatory on both men and women from birth to death. Hence the wives of Talis have to refrain from eating animals prohibited to their husbands, though not to their own maximal lineages, when they have infants at the breast, or, in some clans, throughout their child-bearing period. For, as the natives explain, 'Food changes into milk', and the infant would be committing a sin indirectly. This problem does not arise amongst the Namoos, since all Tale women avoid eating the domestic fowl from the beginning of pubescence onwards. It is one of several food taboos observed by women with the utmost strictness, not for ritual reasons but purely as a matter of feminine propriety.

As with the Namoos, Talis totems and the totems of their congeners in the Sie area, are mythically validated, as we shall see presently. But like Namoos, Talis never express awe or reverence for a clan or lineage totem animal. It is an ordinary, commonplace creature devoid of anything in the nature of a halo of sacredness. They do not, for example, call a totem a sacred object (*bayər*). The emphasis is on the avoidance, the act of conduct as such. There is a notion of moral obligation in keeping the avoidance, but it is directed, as we shall see, to the ancestors and not to the totem animal in its own right.

Talis are not forbidden to kill an animal which is their totemic avoidance, though they would not wantonly do so. They may, and often do, catch these animals alive and sell them to people who are permitted to eat them; for many of these totem animals are considered to be great delicacies.

In one respect, however, the totemic avoidances of the Talis and their congeners differ from the fowl taboo of the Namoos. The former swear an oath by their totems, whereas the Namoos never invoke the fowl in this way. Like the Namoos, Talis can swear by the loin cover they put on their dead. The formula is the same as for the Namoos, with the substitution of the name of the animal whose skin is used: 'By my father and his sheep (or oribi) and his three cowrie shells.' This is a solemn oath, uttered in response to a serious accusation, in proof of one's innocence,

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

I was told. I have never heard it used by anybody, and this itself shows how seriously it is taken.

The oath by the totem is not quite so serious a matter, though it could not be uttered with impunity. The formula is: '*Pakur ni nnuoni*—the tortoise and inside my mouth', if the totemic animal is the tortoise, or, in free translation: 'By the tortoise which I may not eat.' This oath might be used in trivial circumstances. Thus, if a man were wrongly accused of adultery he might swear by his father. But if he were accused of having appropriated something belonging to a friend or relative without permission, though admittedly without intending to steal it, he would swear to his innocence with an oath by his totem. It is the sort of oath, too, informants said, that one might use to assert one's truthfulness in an argument. A person who swears falsely by his totem would decline in health and begin to waste away (*burəm*), but he could probably be saved by atoning sacrifices. A person who swears one of the greater oaths, including the oath by one's father, falsely, will probably die. That is how the natives distinguish the degrees of sacredness they attach to these oaths. Again, I have never heard a totemic oath used, but I have discussed the matter with many people, both young and old, and their views are unanimous. Tallensi are reluctant to swear an oath except in an issue of real importance, and then they resort to the most solemn oath that is appropriate in the situation.

There is nothing secret about these totemic avoidances. Knowledge of them is public and widespread, though not always accurate where the totems of other clans than one's own are concerned. People become acquainted with the totemic avoidances of other clans through their ties of extra-clan kinship, and women spread the knowledge of the totemic avoidances of their paternal clans among the clans into which they marry. An amusing instance of the way in which this knowledge spreads occurred with one of my own boys. He was a Namoo, and one day bought a live water-tortoise from a Tenzugu youth. This is a great delicacy, but, as he told me afterwards, the cooking of it cost him almost more trouble than it was worth. For he had to cook it himself, out of doors in a borrowed pot, because his wife, a Tenzugu woman, was prohibited from eating this animal and refused to let him contaminate her kitchen or her cooking utensils with it.

It is never necessary for Tallensi to ask one another what their totemic avoidances are. When a person is required, for ritual reasons, to observe the taboos of another clan, the people of that clan who come to perform the rites that impose these taboos on him tell him about them. But one can ask a person, 'What do you (i.e. such and such a clan or lineage) taboo? (*ya kiha lani*)', or, 'What do you swear by? (*ya pɔta lani*)', in order to ascertain a group's totemic avoidances.

The animals most widely avoided among the Talis are the tortoise (*pakur*) and the water tortoise (*mieŋ*). Zubiuŋ, Gbizug, and most of the Hill clans taboo both these animals. But there are several exceptions. None of the clans on the Degal side of the Hills keep these avoidances, nor do the people of Tamboog, and only the senior maximal lineage of the three constituent lineages of Soog has them. The people of Degal,

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

basis, for instance, of their technique of divination, which depends on rapid and spontaneous inference from stereotyped signs and symbols.

These myths provide yet another illustration of the indifference of the Tallensi to the origins of their customs. The emphasis in their culture is on conduct, not on creed; on performance rather than on doctrine. At the same time, these myths express, as we have previously noted, the basic postulate of Tale philosophy—that the ancestors are the *fons et origo* of their whole social order—and they show also how the natives visualize their totemic taboos as symbols of the moral and ritual bonds imposed by agnatic descent.

The Totemic Avoidances of the Talis as a Reflex of the Social Structure

We can now resume our analysis of the relationship of Talis ritual observances to the social structure. We have considered certain funeral rites and totemic avoidances as the chief indices of structural differentiation. We have seen that they are not, as the natives sometimes imply, hard-and-fast criteria. They mark off the Talis cluster from the Namoos in a broad way, but reflect the overlapping between them which our study of the clanship system has brought out. And among the Talis themselves, though there is a considerable congruence between genealogical grouping [illegible] determined by the canon of agnatic descent and distinctive ritual observances, it is not a one-to-one relationship.

The funeral customs and totemic taboos we have reviewed have one feature in common which helps to explain why the natives think of them as indices of social differentiation. They are tied to the agnatic line, passed on from father to child just like membership of the lineage. They owe their binding force to the fact that they were, according to native belief, instituted by the ancestors of the lineage or clan. Hence arises a significant common element, the oath associated with the observance. Breach of the ritual observance or using the oath falsely is blasphemy against the ancestors.

We pick up this thread again in another sphere of the ritual system of the Talis. It is a common opinion in Taleland that the taboos against eating the tortoise and water-tortoise are specially characteristic of the Hill Talis. And the reason always given for this is that these taboos are connected with the Talis cult of the External *Bɔyar*. Among the Hill Talis, if a child transgresses the taboo (*galəm kihər*) by eating of the forbidden animal, its father 'pays' (*yɔ*) a fowl to the External *Bɔyar* of which his clan is an adherent. The fowl is sacrificed at the *Bɔyar*, with apologies for the transgression and pleas for the child's future well-being. A fine is thus paid to annul the trespass, and the smallness of the fine is evidence that the trespass is not considered serious.

As a rule, the group of clans and maximal lineages forming the congregation of a particular External *Bɔyar* all have the same avoidances. Thus, all the units that owe ritual allegiance to Bona'ab, the External *Bɔyar* of Kpata'ar and its associated lineages, taboo the tortoise and the water-tortoise. Hence, individuals who are the spiritual wards of Bona'ab may not eat these animals, and, if they belong to other clans or other

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

769 778 881 aegis. Initiation into the *Bɔyar* cult binds the individual by the most solemn covenant known to the natives to uphold the social order bequeathed to the living by the Ancestors; and this is a bond that transcends the lineage. It requires the interests of the lineage to be subordinated to those of the wider community in particular circumstances.

627 794 881 That this is so can be seen from the fact that the most solemn oath of the Hill Talis is the oath by the External *Bɔyar*—'(By) my Ancestor Tɔŋna'ab and his late-millet flour water (*Nyaab Tɔŋna'ab ni u za zɔm kuom*)'. It is strictly forbidden to use late-millet flour in sacrifices at the External *Bɔyar*. The climax of the initiation ceremony is the administration of this oath to the novices at the *Bɔyar*, pledging them, in the name of a thing sternly excluded from its rites, to observe the tenets of the cult and keep the secret of its rites. This oath, in contrast to the oath by the totem animal, is a matter of the utmost gravity. 'If we swear thus', an elder of one of the Hill clans explained to me in tones of obvious awe, 'we all who are Talɔŋ, you know we are speaking the truth. If you swear thus and lie you will die.' It is an oath which would be resorted to only in an extremely serious matter; and its gravity for the Hill Talis is known all over Taleland.

688 627 881 The sanction of the oath is the covenant entered into by a man when he is initiated. The *Bɔyar* destroys a perjurer. 'Will you not be going into the *Bɔyar* to sacrifice, and eat of the (sacrificial) flour and (sacrificial) fowl? This is what kills you (if you swear falsely)', a ritual functionary of the cult declared. It is not even a question of literal participation in the ritual of worship at the *Bɔyar*. A man who has offended it cannot offer sacrifice to his own dead father at his own home; for his father had, in his lifetime, taken part in the sacraments of the cult, and was joined to all the ancestors, whose common shrine is the *Bɔyar*, on his death. By the same reasoning even uninitiated members of clans that belong to a *Bɔyar* congregation can validly use the oath, though they would be unlikely to do so. For they are also 'the children of the *Bɔyar*'; their life, too, is 'in the keeping' of the ancestors who abide there. They will become initiated members of the cult if they are men, and they are members of the lineages incorporated into the cult if they are women.

182 771 When Hill Talis are asked how their totemic taboos are connected with the cult of the External *Bɔyar*, they say 'they belong together (*ba tɔya taaba*)'. The phrase implies that the two things are different but intrinsically related. In fact, the Hill Talis think of all their ritual institutions as being somehow connected with the *Bɔyar* cult. For behind all of them stands the sanction of the ancestor spirits. Totemic taboos hold independently of the *Bɔyar* cult. Breach of them, or a false oath by the totem animals, does not provoke the wrath of the *Bɔyar*. Fines are paid to the *Bɔyar* for a breach of totemic taboos because it is the supreme manifestation of the ancestors. If a person transgresses an obligation that falls on him by virtue of his descent, it is obviously necessary to appease the ancestors. On the same principle, the Hill Talis hale an adulterous wife to the External *Bɔyar* in order to force her to confess; for her sin endangers the life of her husband and children and thus jeopardizes their line of descent. This is a matter of concern to the ancestors, not only

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

682 sacrifices of expiation or else 'their house—i.e. line of descent—is destroyed (*ba yiri ŋmaarɔme*)' in retribution. This is the strongest sanction against homicide among the Tallensi. Whether it is intended or accidental, whether the victim is a clansman or a stranger, and has been slain at home or abroad, homicide is a sin against the Earth and must be expiated. But it is so grave a sin that it can, in fact, never be wholly atoned for. 'You cannot finish paying' the Tallensi say. It is a sin that pursues the wrongdoer's agnatic descendants for generations.

●627 682 577 The Tallensi have no juridical machinery for taking penal action against a murderer and do not exact compensation. Between clans homicide may lead to vengeance and war; within the clan it does not. In the latter case it is like a cow that has trampled on its calf and killed it, the natives say. In either case the matter is left to the arbitrament of Earth. Tallensi who have shed human blood take no pride in it. A man who can be persuaded to confide the story of how he killed another speaks of his deed as if it were forced on him by circumstances. Though homicide seems to have been an infrequent occurrence in the past, it was by no means rare; but every instance I have heard of was presented as a reprehensible action, even if it was due to provocation or done in self-help. Informants always draw the moral prescribed by Tale ethical values. So-and-so killed a man and died childless; So-and-so left only one young son; deaths pile up in such-and-such a family because their father had shot a man. In the long run, again, the reaction to sacrilege is greater respect for the moral norm and its ritual sanction.

578 682 Bloodshed and strife are symptoms and causes of deep rifts in or between human communities. The taboos against them show us the Earth as a sanction of solidarity within and between communities; and this is of particular interest in relation to the structure of the settlement. The bond between community and locality has moral implications for the natives that transcend the crude facts of spatial distribution and economic organization in which they are rooted. It is worth while tracing out these implications somewhat further from the starting-point of the individual farmer again.

The Social Framework of Production: Land Tenure

241 471 [461] 431 The farming unit among the Tallensi is the group of male agnates of a single household who usually form a nuclear lineage. Most of the plots it farms are owned by the farming unit, but some may be borrowed for a shorter or longer period and some held by gift. In the case of borrowed or gift land the farmer—distinguished as the 'owner of the farm' (*kuoraana*)—pays no rent to the owner—distinguished as 'the owner of the soil' (*tamraana*)—or tribute to a political authority. An annual gift of grain, when crops are good, is the only return he makes to the owner of the land, and this is a voluntary gesture of gratitude, not a jural obligation. Borrowed land always reverts to the owner. Theoretically gift land can also be resumed at will by the owner. In practice it often becomes the property of the recipient's lineage in the third or fourth generation after the gift, if it has been farmed continuously by that lineage. This is either because donor and recipient are usually kin, related in such a way that

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

of Təŋ-Kuorəg. The practical duties of his office were carried out by his sons and other elders of the section. The decrepitude of age does not make a chief or tendaana any the less a chief or tendaana. The activities of the office are simply taken over by his sons.

Tallensi never undertake anything of importance,—for instance, a marriage transaction or the building of a new shrine or making a new bush farm—without the knowledge of the other members of the medial lineage and without consulting or at least informing the head of their section or maximal lineage. The home of the lineage head is the centre of the social life of the lineage members and their families. There is a constant coming and going of members of the lineage at the lineage head's homestead. There they often congregate in the dry season to gossip or discuss their affairs under his shade tree. Visiting kinsmen and affines of lineage members from other clans usually call to greet him there. This applies especially to the medial lineage but also to maximal lineages and sections in a slightly lesser degree. The lineage head himself, if he is able-bodied, often goes to see other members of the lineage. The bonds of solidarity, mutual interest, and knowledge of one another's affairs are thus constantly being knit together within the lineage.

Though a lineage head has no judicial authority, he is often asked to arbitrate in disputes or conflicts between segments of the lineage. What he generally tries to do is to bring about a compromise and reconciliation, for he has no powers of enforcing his decision. When he is successful in adjusting differences, it is on account of his prestige and because he has the public opinion of the lineage on his side. No lineage head would attempt to adjust a dispute in the lineage without the advice and backing of the other elders of the lineage.

The sanction of a lineage head's position is the ancestor cult. Even a chief has, in the native social order, no judicial or economic sanctions to support his authority. A tendaana has, in addition, the sanction of the Earth. The role of the lineage head in corporate affairs, his duties, responsibilities, and privileges all arise from the fact that he has custody of the lineage *bɔyar*. The strength of this sanction depends not only on the natives' belief in the mystical powers of the ancestors but also on the crucial function of the ancestor cult as the ideology around which lineage relations are organized. The cult of the lineage ancestors is the supreme centripetal force in lineage relations. Many men live far away from their lineage homes. They maintain their lineage bonds on account of their dependence on the ancestor cult. Individuals may transgress the norms of lineage unity and amity with apparent impunity. Their death, when it comes, is conceptualized as a punishment from the ancestors and this serves to reaffirm the norms of lineage solidarity.

Because of this, sacrifices to the lineage *bɔyar* form the key mechanism for maintaining lineage cohesion and affirming the status of the lineage head. The first of these sacrifices made by a new lineage head (in a lineage of a high order) when he formally takes over the custody of the *bɔyar* is of outstanding significance. Not less than three or four and sometimes ten to fifteen years elapse between successive ceremonies of this sort. They are occasions of special solemnity marking the re-establishment of

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

613 the proper structural form of the lineage around a new lineage head after
769 its temporary disturbance by the death of his predecessor. Not only do
182 all the adult members of the lineage attend, each bearing a fowl to be
782 sacrificed on behalf of himself and his segment, but representatives of other branches of the clan and very many extra-clan kin, descendants of daughters of the lineage, also attend. The pattern of the rites is the same as that of any sacrifice to the *bɔyar*, but all who participate feel them to be a specially binding sacrament. An atmosphere of great goodwill and fellowship prevails, particularly during the festive episodes of sharing out the meat and the beer.

613 In addition, the funeral of a lineage head is an event that mobilizes
764 the entire lineage structure and demonstrates the power of the religious
182 sanctions as the bulwark of his position. Special rites are performed, in many clans, to detach his social personality from the lineage shrines. And it is often in the divination sessions at the funerals of lineage heads that suppressed intra-lineage conflicts are brought into the open. The religious sanctions against intra-lineage conflict are thus set in motion and reconciliations brought about.

613 A mere catalogue of the chief privileges and responsibilities of the head of lineage of a high order is sufficient to indicate his social role as chief representative of the lineage in relation to other lineages and to the ancestors. No ceremonial or jural transaction in which the lineage is concerned as a whole can take place without the presence of the lineage head or his deputy. When the carcass of an animal slaughtered for ritual or ceremonial purposes is divided up, the best part of the portion allotted to a particular lineage is reserved for the *kpeem*. When a member of the
[224] lineage kills an animal in the hunt, one hind leg and sometimes the skin are the perquisites of the lineage head (of the medial or maximal lineage), and the skull and horns are deposited with him. In these and similar situations the *kpeem's* privileges are regarded as a means of apprising the
[769] ancestors of the event and winning their blessings. The meat he gets, for instance, is 'set out for the ancestor spirits (*zien kpiim*)' before it is consumed.

613 Certain sacrifices to the lineage ancestors are obligatory on every man
782 of advanced years. They are both a sign of gratitude to the ancestors
769 and a symbol of the common interest of the whole lineage in the giver's welfare and possessions. Thus a man must sacrifice one of the cows he receives for his eldest daughter's bride-price to the lineage *bɔyar* of his medial lineage; and the lineage head receives a hind leg and the skin as well as other parts of the animal. Similarly if a man wishes to set up a new ancestor shrine he must first inform his lineage ancestors by means of a sacrifice to the *bɔyar*. Hence Tallensi say that one of the advantages of being the head of a medial or maximal lineage is that there is always meat in the house. But this privilege, they add, is a compensation for the responsibilities of lineage headship. Not the least of these is the *kpeem's* duty to make frequent sacrifices to the ancestors in order to preserve their goodwill towards the lineage.

613 All interlineage jural and ritual transactions take place formally
578 through the lineage heads. Thus if a man seduces the wife of a member
627

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

of another medial or maximal lineage of his own or a closely allied clan, hostility between the two units is aroused and their normal relations are thrown out of gear. But usually steps are very quickly taken to set matters right. Either the head of the wronged lineage sends to protest to the head of the seducer's lineage, and the latter, backed by the lineage elders, makes the seducer confess and agree to apologize, or else the culprit himself, aware that public opinion would reprove his action, begs the head of his nuclear lineage to get the head of their medial or maximal lineage to intercede on his behalf with the head of the wronged lineage. It is at the homestead of the latter that the rites of reconciliation are performed by representatives of the two lineages. This is typical of inter-lineage jural relations.

A woman who commits adultery exposes her husband and children to mystical dangers. Among Namoos she is haled to the homestead of the head of her husband's medial lineage and subjected to the ordeal of entering the gateway (*zanɔr*). If she confesses she may enter safely. If not, the lineage ancestors will cause her to get ill if she enters the gateway. This is a very powerful sanction of marital fidelity among women and is one reason why adultery is not very common. Tallensi sum up the role of the lineage head in the sentence, 'All our (lineage) affairs are conducted at the gateway of our lineage head's homestead (i.e. the lineage *zanɔr*—cf. p. 208) (*Ti yɛla kama maana ti kpeem yir zanɔne*)'.

In the old days the men of a medial lineage all assembled at the *kpeem's* homestead before going out to fight. There they all took part in sacrifices to the ancestors and 'ate (*di*)' protective medicine to fortify themselves against the enemy's arrows. Nowadays they do the same before setting out on a communal hunting expedition, for there are many dangers to be faced—accidental arrow wounds, fire, and wild beasts. This is the service for which the *kpeem* is rewarded when he is given a hind leg of every animal slain by the sons of the lineage.

The *kpeem's* functions are most conspicuous in relation to the wives and children of the lineage, for they stand for the greatest common interest of the lineages. It is the reproductive powers of the wives and the existence of children that secure the perpetuation of the lineage and the immortality of the ancestors. The handling of a woman who commits adultery illustrates this. Similarly the lineage elders must be informed of, and the lineage head give his formal consent to, the re-marriage of a widow of any member of the lineage. A widow is in theory entitled to reject a husband chosen for her by her late husband's nuclear lineage and to choose any member of his clan of the right generation. If she does this she must get the consent of the head of his medial lineage and this is binding on the whole medial lineage. Her late husband's nuclear lineage cannot then object to her marrying out of that lineage.

The head of a medial or maximal lineage comes into the formalities of marriage for every member, man or woman, of the lineage, in his capacity as its chief representative in interlineage jural relations. The right to dispose of a girl in marriage is vested in her guardian the head of her nucleur lineage. It is he who receives and owns the bride-

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

have no clear notion of witchcraft, no detailed theories of its mode of operation, and no institutionalized means of combating or sterilizing it. A witch (*sɔri*) is supposed to fly about (*u aɣarəme*) at night in the guise of a ball of fire; she—for the Tallensi tend to think of a witch as a woman, though they say that men may be witches too—is supposed to be clairvoyant, to 'see (*nye*)' hidden things. She can recognize fellow witches, foresee death coming to a particular person, prophesy an epidemic, and so forth; she may be beneficent, able to impart luck to a person in a mysterious way, or maleficent, killing people by eating (*ɔb*) their souls (*sii*). This is the sum of Tale ideas about the nature of witches. Actually, these qualities make up what is mainly an imaginary stereotype. One never hears of particular individuals being credited with the socially useful qualities or being suspected of possessing the anti-social qualities attributed to witches. Witchcraft is only attributed to people *ex post facto*, when an event occurs for which an explanation in terms of witchcraft is sought.

Witchcraft is something on the fringe of Tale mystical thought and ritual values. I have more than once heard elders of the most conservative way of thinking, to whom the native scheme of ritual values is the most important thing in life, declare roundly that there is no such thing as a witch. Though the Tallensi do not put it into clear words, they obviously feel that the idea of witchcraft is a mixture of superstition and folk-lore, and not a part of the system of mystical and ritual values that really matters for the conduct of life. Of course, superstition and folk-lore are not wholly negligible. Circumstances occur, now and then, in which people fall back on the idea of a witch's occult aggression in order to cope with anxieties and frustrations that are normally neutralized through the agency of the ancestor cult; and then a particular person may be accused of being a witch. Significantly, in every case that has come to my notice, some dating back twenty or thirty years and all of them together numbering less than ten, the accused has been a woman. Most accusations of this sort are in the first instance made by women against co-wives, and are symptomatic of the tensions inherent in the joint family.

An accusation of being a witch is the private affair of the accused's husband and his maximal lineage, her paternal family, and those of her *saarət* who are in touch with her. In former days, if the accusation was confirmed by a diviner, the accused might insist on undergoing the arrow ordeal (*kuh sɔ-peema*), or be compelled to do so by her husband's lineage and her *saarət* in order to prove her innocence. She had to stab herself with a poisoned arrow in public at the same time as a branch of a *keŋkaŋ* (Ficus) tree was plucked; and if she were guilty, it was believed that she would die before the branch withered. But it is characteristic of the Tale attitude to witches that a person who died thus was accorded a proper funeral—unlike, for example, a person who

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

754 dies of small-pox—and that the decision was not accepted as conclusive
602 by her *saarət* whom it directly implicated. A proven witch's uterine
[593] kin, her children in particular, felt the shame for a time, but they were not publicly stigmatized or penalized. Even the husband of an apparently guilty woman would, judging by what happens nowadays, very often continue privately to believe in her innocence; and if he admitted her guilt would not allow this to influence his relations with his children by her.

754 The public attitude to a witch nowadays is illustrated by the following
574 case which occurred during my stay among the Tallensi. A young man
602 from Yinduuri went to visit a kinsman at Moyaduur. Arriving at his kinsman's house, he was offered some cold porridge by an old woman of the house who happened to be the only person at home. Now, cold porridge is not a dish to offer to a guest. The poorest native would blush with shame if he had nothing better to put before a visitor. But in this instance the young man was weary and hungry after a long tramp. His kinsman was not at home to offer him more seemly hospitality and the old woman had nothing else. So he accepted it gladly.

754 Later in the day, on his way home, the youth was suddenly taken ill
● 627 with what soon proved to be acute dysentery. He at once thought of
787 the old woman's cold porridge and told his family of this when he reached home. Next day he died. Thereupon his father accused the old woman of having bewitched the youth through the medium of the cold porridge, and so caused his death. Her unconventional hospitality and the sequence of events seemed to leave no doubt about her guilt. There was, it is true, no obvious motive, but this was not taken into consideration. Indeed, as one man remarked, the youth was himself partly to blame, for no self-respecting adult would eat cold porridge at someone else's house. However, the old woman was sent for and the matter submitted to divination. As the dead youth's clansmen had no doubt about her guilt, it is not to be wondered at that the diviner declared her to have bewitched him. In vain she protested her innocence. The head of the youth's maximal lineage told all his people to mock (*wool*) her with a derisive chant. Neighbouring clans took up the chant, as she passed on her way home, and some weeks later it was made the theme of one of the dance songs of the Golib Festival. 'Wherever she goes', my informants said, 'men, women, and children will look askance at her and jeer at her for being a witch. Shame and grief will dog her, [626] and she will pine away and die.' It was for fear of this kind of public ostracism that anyone accused of being a witch in the old days insisted on undergoing the arrow ordeal.

754 The main reason why witchcraft is of minor significance in Tale
[771] mystical thought is because the elaborate ancestor cult and the Earth cult deal adequately with most social and psychological tensions in terms consistent with the total social structure. The idea of witchcraft is not

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

the *zɔŋ*, they symbolize the continuity of the lineage of which the master of that house is but one member, a link in a process to which he makes his greatest contribution as a father and head of a house. Hence the *zɔŋ* of a lineage head, being the sanctuary of all the lineage ancestors, is regarded as the *zɔŋ* of the whole lineage, and his *zanɔr* as the *zanɔr* of the lineage. When the Hill Talis were forcibly expelled in 1910–11 and their homesteads demolished, the heads of the maximal lineages later came back by stealth to rebuild a small part of their *zɔŋ* walls, for they could not appropriately sacrifice to their lineage ancestors elsewhere than in the lineage *zɔŋ*. If a woman commits adultery, she sins against her husband's lineage ancestors, thus imperilling the health and welfare of her husband and children. An adulteress, that is to say, transgresses the rights over her reproductive powers vested absolutely in her husband's lineage. Thus, if a woman is suspected of adultery she is subjected to the ordeal of entering (*kpe*) the lineage *zɔŋ* or *zanɔr*. She must face the ancestors directly, for she has committed an outrage against the lineage principle the absolute value of which is symbolized in and safeguarded by the ancestor spirits.[1] If she is guilty and does not confess, she will get ill and perhaps die. Women are terrified of this ordeal, which rarely fails to produce a confession.

Though they come and go freely in the *sapak* and *zɔŋ* in the ordinary course of domestic life, the women and children belong specifically to the domestic quarters proper. These lie behind a low wall (*ycbɔg*) a yard or so in height and about the same in length, at the back of the *sapak*. This wall usually runs between the back of a kitchen or storeroom and a large bullet-shaped chamber from 7 to 10 feet high and 6 to 10 feet in diameter at the base. This is the granary (*buur*). One suffices for a small family like Ondieso's. A wealthier man with a more numerous household may have one principal granary and one or more smaller ones. A granary has only one opening, at the top, covered with a lid of tightly plaited thatch like an enormous hat.

In the granary, again, Tale architecture embodies a fundamental element in the structure of the domestic unit. A bird's-eye view of a Tale homestead would show the principal granary as standing roughly in the centre of the circle of rooms, rising like a beacon between that section of the homestead which in use, thought, and feeling is the domain of the men, and that section which forms the living-quarters and is ruled by the women. The granary is the pivot on which the smooth working of the domestic unit turns. It holds the millet and guinea corn which provide the staple food of the natives. Without this, life cannot be satisfactorily sustained from one harvest to the next, and the household cannot exist, let alone keep its unity. What a sufficiency of food means to the Tallensi has been described in our previous

[1] This is the complementary notion to that of 'polluting the room' described above, p. 28.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

578 come to demand a runaway daughter and her would-be husband's
602 lineage elders. The young man will hide the girl with friends, or use
other stratagems to keep her, backed up for the time being, and chiefly
●627 for form's sake, by his lineage elders. But later he may have a struggle with the head of his nuclear lineage if he is opposed to the marriage. It is not until the formal placation gift (*sɛndaan*) is sent to the girl's father with his consent and that of his lineage elders, that a truce comes, and not until the first instalment of the bride-price is paid that a promise of peace appears—which may not be for months, or even for a couple of years.

675 The placation gift and the bride-price provide an objective instrument
583 by means of which the two lineage segments which are the parties to a marriage can balance their divergent interests in and opposing rights over the woman. It is the instrument that separates the woman from her natal family—or rather, it separates her role as wife from her role as daughter, her subordination to her husband from her subjection to her father, so that the conflict between these roles is kept in check.

583 That is the meaning of the rule I once heard summed up in the
576 maxim: 'A woman must not be at her father's house when they (her husband's people) send the placation gifts. That is a taboo.' The young man who said this was protesting at the breach of this rule forced upon him by the unscrupulous action of one of the leading elders of his clan. The rule applies both to the placation gift and to the bride-price.

574 A newly wed wife, therefore, often finds herself torn between her
593 desire to be with her husband and her loyalty and sense of duty to her parents, enhanced as this is by her respect for parental authority. Tallensi realize that she must be weaned from her attachment to her parents. Thus for the first month or two of marriage a young wife is not allowed to visit her parents, lest, as the natives say, her longing for her mother should get the better of her and she should refuse to return to her husband. Even after some years of marriage men object to young wives paying prolonged visits to their parents without good cause, as we have seen. I have often been amused at the mood of bristling suspicion which comes over a man left a grass-widower for a week or two, though he has probably consented to his wife's going on a visit and may have other wives at home. It must be admitted, however, that wives [837] run off with other men often enough after such visits to give grounds for the taunt of innate frivolity and fickleness that men throw up against the whole of the opposite sex. A woman in her father's house assumes, for the time being, the social personality of a daughter; and it is as if she is prone, then, to doff her wifehood and with it her sense of duty to her husband. Tallensi say that, if a man falls out with his father-in-law, his wife will take her husband's part when she is with him, but will side with her father at her parental home. Only after several years of marriage, with children pledging her to marital fidelity and an established relationship binding her to her husband, is she most likely to

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

583 which, it is tacitly understood, his wife will one day make good. Often such debts between spouses are straightened out by mutual borrowings,
426 tacitly understood to cancel one another. Very often, however, a man has to cajole his wife with definite promises to repay before she will lend him her property. But the natives are emphatic about one point: that all such transactions belong to the give and take of marital co-operation and solidarity. It is one of the ways in which a woman stands by her husband and a man by his wife.

The Husband's Authority over his Wife

593 As might well be expected, these rights and duties of spouse to spouse do not rest on anything in the nature of a formal compact. There is no
578 jural machinery or sanction by means of which a husband or wife can be compelled to perform his or her duties to his or her partner. A man can, and sometimes does, chastise his wife for incorrigible laziness, disobedience, or a misdemeanour detrimental to the unity of the family. He does it usually in a fit of anger or exasperation, as one would strike a child, and not as a deliberate punishment. For though Tallensi think that such disciplinary measures are right and necessary sometimes (women being kittle cattle, who will not always listen to reason), they consider them to be a regrettable and undignified necessity not entirely in keeping with the relationship of marriage, and at bottom repugnant to a self-respecting man. That is why when a quarrel between husband and wife ends in blows, neighbours hearing the commotion rush in to separate the pair and calm the enraged husband. 'I often scold my wives', said a Tale friend to me, after a heated argument with one of them, 'but I have never, as I sit here, lifted a hand to them. How could I thrash my wife, seeing that she gave up her father and her mother to come and marry me?' To beat a wife, in short, shows a poor appreciation of her.

Women admit the right of a man to strike his wife, and they see it as a feature of the authority over her conferred on him by marriage. But in fact, cases of wife-beating are far from common. Judging by the cases I have heard of, they are least likely to occur at the two extremes of the marriage cycle. A young man fears that he may lose his wife if he beats her; an older man, as the statement quoted above shows, with a wife of long standing, feels that it is incompatible with their mutual trust and comradeship.

593 A woman will not, as a rule, bear a grudge for blows struck under provocation. But if she is excessively, or, in her opinion, unjustifiably
●627 thrashed, she will run away from her husband. She may go off with another man; or she may return to her father or brother, who, if he is a self-respecting man, will take her part and refuse to give her up until her husband apologizes and promises better behaviour in future. In any case, it is a troublesome affair for the husband. It is worth noting, also, that in her conjugal family only a woman's husband has the right

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

to strike her. Her parents-in-law, for instance, despite their authority over her, would not do so. If anything, they would try to restrain their son from beating her. Only her husband has that combination of authority and intimacy in relation to her which permits the use of physical force upon her.

But flight is not the only weapon a woman has in order to maintain her rights and privileges in her conjugal family. Once she is fairly free from the leading strings of her mother-in-law, she is the mistress of her time and energies. It is an accepted axiom of married life, which no man questions, that a wife is free to dispose of her time as she pleases, provided she does not hamper the essential economic activities of the household, or neglect her children, or remain away from home for unwarrantable periods or at times—e.g. during the Great Festivals—when all the members of the family should be together. The routine of domestic tasks, over which men have no control, is a strong line of defence against the interference of men in their wives' disposal of their time. But differences of opinion on this matter are a common cause of squabbles between husband and wife. A young woman dresses up to go to market; her husband objects, saying that other men will be paying court to her there, or that the children will be left hungry all day; she insists; and a heated argument ensues. Nine times out of ten the woman has her way. Occasionally the husband succeeds in stopping her, by persuasion or by force. It is only at sowing or harvest time, or when, for instance, preparations for an important ceremony are in hand, that a man has full control over his wife's time.

At all times a wife's freedom to arrange her work and her leisure as best suits her may subject her husband to inconvenience. If, at the end of the day, she is too preoccupied or too tired to cook, he can but grumble and go hungry. And if he annoys her she can make a point of being too busy to attend to some want of his or too tired to cook the evening meal. This, men say frankly, is one of the strongest arguments in favour of keeping on good terms with one's wife.

Tallensi regard these utilitarian rights and duties, services and attentions of husband and wife towards each other as a most important feature of marriage. But it is clear that they do not constitute the unique relationship that distinguishes the marriage tie from other social ties of the Tallensi. Thus a woman performs much the same utilitarian services as daughter in her natal home, and as mother, wife, and daughter-in-law in her conjugal home. They are but a part of the whole configuration of co-operation, mutual help, reciprocal services, etiquette, and mutual tolerance that keep the wheels of family life running smoothly. And it is clear, also, that they imply the existence of common interests that create a sense of mutual moral obligation.

This underlying bond of mutual moral obligation is the basic sanction of reciprocity and co-operation in the domestic family. In the case of

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

homestead, thrashed him soundly, and destroyed many of his personal belongings. This is typical of the anger stirred up by adultery within the clan. Such action would not be taken against a man who committed incest with a father's or brother's wife, though he might be sent to Coventry for a time. For this kind of incest is, at bottom, a question of conscience. The public reaction with regard to it is of no consequence compared with the vileness of the sin and the wrath of the ancestors.

If a man's wife is seduced by a member of another clan, this is also adultery, as has been mentioned, and a wrong against the husband's clan. If the two clans have local or structural ties, the breach must be mended by the prescribed ritual reconciliation. If they have no such ties, no redress is available to the injured husband's clan. He and his clansmen will try to 'cancel the debt (*lɛrəg samər*)' by seducing the wife of a member of the clan that has wronged him, when any of them gets a chance of doing so.

A man's exclusive sexual rights over his wife are secured, also, by mystical sanctions to which the woman is subject. If she has sexual relations with any man other than her husband she commits a grave sin. It is, as the natives say, 'dirt' (*dayət*), mystical defilement. It may bring sickness or death on the woman's husband or children or even on herslf, for it is a serious affront to her husband's ancestors. As we have noted before, adultery (*pəɣamboən*, lit. woman-thing) in a wife is regarded with revulsion not unmixed with real dread. The woman has committed something not far short of sacrilege, for she has flouted the rights of her husband's lineage over her reproductive powers. Hence she cannot be admitted to his home again until she confesses before the shrine of the lineage ancestors, the symbolic incarnation of the lineage itself. The threat to the life of the lineage is felt to be so grave that among the Hill Talis an adulteress is forced to confess at the External Bəɣar,[1] the supreme ancestor shrine. Men do not hesitate to use the most callous third-degree methods, short of physical maltreatment, to exact a confession from a wayward wife.

Lastly, a man's wife continues to belong to him sexually after his death until his final funeral ceremonies have been made. Apart from a few ritual observances in sign of mourning, which do not embarrass her greatly, a widow is free to go about her normal life in the interval between her husband's death and his final obsequies. But she is subject to one iron taboo: she may not have sexual relations. It is a much graver sin than during her husband's lifetime, endangering not only her children and herself but her husband's spiritual status. A dead man whose wife has *kaa gaba*, broken the mourning of widowhood, as this misdemeanour is called, cannot have descendants given to him as spiritual wards, for his spiritual status is smirched. It is for this reason that, when

[1] Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, ch. vii.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

resignation that was touching in the circumstances, that he missed his mother dreadfully. When she was alive, he explained, he never went to bed hungry. She always had something for him to eat even in the leanest times. But nowadays he often slept hungry; for his other 'mothers' had their own children to think of; in times of scarcity they would put aside extra food for their own children but not for him. At best he might get the scraps.

The genealogical and social differentiation of a woman and her children from every other woman and her children of the same domestic family is the kernel of the notion of uterine (*soog*) descent. The cultural definition of this notion gets its psychological content, its meaning for the individual, from the relations of mother and child and co-wife to co-wife.

To every woman, therefore, her own children are the most complete incarnation of her own social self, of her autonomy and status in the family, and of the differentiation of her *dug* from those of her co-wives. That is what the concept *soog* means for a mother in relation to her children. Emotionally wrapped up in them as she is, she becomes almost anarchical in her concern for their welfare. There are women who resent it strongly if a co-wife scolds one of their children; and it is quite common for a woman to get into a fury if her child is struck by a co-wife's child, let alone by a co-wife herself. Many quarrels between co-wives begin in this way. That is why children are taught to keep out of their mothers' co-wives' rooms as much as possible and to behave carefully if they go into them.

The ever-present tension between co-wives, reduced to a minimum at most times, occasionally bursts out acutely. This is liable to happen if a child gets ill of a malady that defies all attempts to cure it, the more so if it is an unusual sickness of sudden onset. The distracted mother is likely then to turn on a co-wife (another wife of her husband, or a wife of one of his brothers) whose own children are well and happy and therefore the bitterest reminder of her evil fortune. Being co-wives the women are sure to have had differences and even quarrels in the past. So now the sick child's mother accuses her co-wife of being a witch (*zɔi*) and of having caused the illness of the child. Infrequent as accusations of witchcraft were in former days and are now, Tallensi say that most of them were made by women against a co-wife owing to the illness or death of a child. This is the more significant in view of the association between witchcraft and uterine descent. An accusation of witchcraft brands a woman and her children equally, but it does not impugn the male line or, consequently, the *yir*.

When hostility between co-wives reaches this pitch it cannot but result in a serious disturbance of the unity and cohesion of the family. Formerly, as we have learnt, the accused woman might have been compelled to undergo the arrow ordeal, or would herself, backed by her

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

595 627 178 578

paternal kin and more strongly by her uterine kin (*saarət*), insist on doing so. If she survived, she and her children and other *soog* kin would never forgive her accuser. There would be chronic friction in the family. If she died, her children and other *soog* kin would still resent the imputation against them and would have a lifelong grievance against her accuser and her children. The accuser would in any case bear the ritual blame, and would be in danger of mystical retribution. Nowadays, to judge by one case that came to my notice, the accused woman and her kin insist on an oath by the *bɔɣar*, usually the *bɔɣar* of the husband's medial lineage. Both women swear to the justice of their case before the *bɔɣar*, and the one who suffers a serious misfortune soonest—a misfortune such as grave sickness or death in her own *dug* of the house—is deemed to be in the wrong. Whatever the outcome, it amounts to one member of the family invoking the *bɔɣar* which watches over the welfare of the whole group to injure another member of the unit; and this is a sacrilege, even if it is done in the name of justice. It must be atoned for by sacrifices to which both women and their husband (or husbands) have to contribute. But the *bɔɣar* is never wholly appeased; it may still bring misfortune on the family for the sacrilege. And, of course, both women and their *soog* kin might continue to harbour resentment. An accusation of witchcraft, itself the symptom of the conflicts latent in the structure of the polygamous family, breeds endless discord.

595

But it must be emphasized that such cases are rare. For the most part women rub along pretty well with their co-wives. In this the senior wife (*pɔɣakpeem*)—seniority being reckoned according to order of marriage—may exercise a great deal of influence, especially if, as is likely, she is older than the others. Though she has no disciplinary authority over her younger co-wives, she has considerable moral authority over them. As her husband's closest confidante among his wives she knows all the affairs of the family and has its interests close at heart. She stands for the common allegiance of the wives to their husband and the family. A wise and tactful senior wife will keep an eye on the household economy and on the children without seeming to interfere with the liberty of her younger co-wives. Looking up to her with respect and affection, her younger co-wives will accept advice and guidance from her that does much to make the routine of family life smooth and pleasant. The fiction that she is the real mistress of the house (*dugdaana*) and that all the children 'belong' to her in a special sense gives her a formal status that makes this easier. If a suitor calls to see a girl of the family he must pay his respects to the senior wife before he goes to greet the girl's own mother. If a woman's son-in-law sends her gifts of sweet potatoes, yams, and guinea-fowls at the time of the Harvest Festival, she will call all her co-wives proudly to see the gifts, and will distribute some of the tubers among them; but in addition the senior wife will receive a guinea-fowl as a mark of special honour. In such ways is the mistress of the

[431]

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

577 But if the father's brother does not take the initiative of pointing out to
593 his 'son' that he would be better off on his own, the latter cannot do so. It would be like suggesting that his proxy father is not treating him as fairly as his own father. The usual course of events is that something goes wrong with the young man's affairs. It may be a trivial mishap, such as a hen being caught by a hyena, or something more serious, such as the sickness of wife or child. The young man goes with his proxy father to consult a diviner; and the diviner declares that the trouble was caused by the young man's own father, because the young man has not yet built his own homestead. The dead father lets it be known that he wants to go directly to his son's own house to accept sacrifices and not have to go to his brother's house as a mere guest. Thus the dictates of filial piety are subtly and doubly fulfilled.

577 Filial piety, as these examples show, is the psychological bridge
593 between the relations of parents and children in life and in the ritual
769 relationships of the living with the ancestors. All the ancestors are projections of the parents, different manifestations of the images Tale culture draws of certain aspects of the parents that do not appear in conventional, overt behaviour. This is clear, also, from the element of reverence that enters into the sentiment of filial piety.

Siŋ's father and Na'abzɔ were the sons of two brothers. When Siŋ's
577 father died, Na'abzɔ married his widow and took charge of the children.
593 But Na'abzɔ is a notoriously cantankerous person. So Siŋ took his younger brothers and mother and set up in his own homestead as soon as he was old enough. In jural and ritual matters, however, Na'abzɔ is still his 'father'. Passing Siŋ's house one day with an elder I heard sounds of violent quarrelling between him and Na'abzɔ. Na'abzɔ stood on the flat roof of a room in his house hurling abuse at Siŋ, who replied angrily, but politely, from his gateway 50 yards away. My companion and I turned aside to talk to Siŋ. It appeared that Na'abzɔ had as usual been nagging Siŋ and his brothers unreasonably. He demanded that they should leave their own farm-work to come and hoe his farm. When Siŋ asked for his help, which was indispensable, in an important ritual matter, he had refused out of petty spite; and now he had upset Siŋ's sister's marriage by arbitrary and inconsiderate demands on her husband. I asked Siŋ, 'Why don't you take hold of Na'abzɔ and thrash him? That should stop him.' He looked at me in dismay and said, 'No, no. I couldn't do that. It is forbidden. He is my father. He begot me.' My companion, almost as shocked, chimed in, 'No, you can't strike your father, you can't strike your mother. They have borne (*dʒʊa*) you. He who strikes his father or his mother is a good-for-nothing.' He went on to say that everybody knew what sort of a person Na'abzɔ was, but Siŋ
577 must be patient. It would all come right. For would not Na'abzɔ die
593 one day and Siŋ inherit all his property? Similar comments were made
627 by everybody I met about Dɪŋkumis's brother's son, Dmaarəb. The

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

young man was a lazy spendthrift and there was constant trouble between the two. One day Dɛŋkumis forcibly stopped him from beating his wife and he turned and struck Dɛŋkumis. There was an uproar, for other men of the lineage set upon Dmaarəb with sticks and fists. Next day Dɛŋkumis, followed by all the men of his lineage segment, dragged the delinquent to the chief. As it was a *dugni yɛl*, an affair of the inner lineage, the chief dealt with it as head of the clan. Trembling with anger and contempt he read the youth an excoriating homily on how a person ought to behave to his parents. Dɛŋkumis, ended the chief, had been too patient with the worthless scamp just because he was his brother's son. Let him beware. Another action of this kind, and Dɛŋkumis would be commanded to throw him out of his house.

Another story deserves recording as an example of the working of filial piety. Kuŋaaŋba was born when his father was an old man. At that time a famine swept the country. A distant clansman of his father seized his mother and her babe to sell them into slavery and recoup himself for a debt owed to him by Kuŋaaŋba's father. But the woman managed to escape. When the famine was over she returned home to find her husband dead and his brother Gəlime at the head of the household. Gəlime, however, disregarding the rule that whoever inherits a man's property and status must take over his duties and liabilities, at first refused to have her back. She was like a corpse that had come to life again, he said. But his own wife, with an independence of spirit that Tale women often show, threatened to leave him if he did not take her co-wife and the child back, so he gave in. In due course Kuŋaaŋba's mother remarried one of her late husband's classificatory brothers, under whose care the boy grew up. Jurally and ritually Gəlime remained his 'father'. Then Kuŋaaŋba went to work for the white man at Kumasi. He returned with a quantity of clothes, a bag of salt, and three or four pounds in cash. He found Gəlime, now an old man in decline, left almost destitute, as his own sons, whom he had always treated with severity, had both run away to the Colony. Kuŋaaŋba at once took the old man to his own house. He gave him a cloth to wear, bought a supply of grain for him, and left him some money when he himself departed for another spell of work abroad. Thereafter Kuŋaaŋba took care of Gəlime as if he were his own father until the end of his life. 'For', said Kuŋaaŋba, as he concluded his simple tale, 'was he not my father? What did it matter that he had treated me badly in my childhood, since I am still alive and healthy? I couldn't leave my father to die of starvation just because his own sons were wastrels.' I asked Kuŋaaŋba if Gəlime had ever expressed remorse for having neglected his duty to him in his childhood. 'No,' was the answer, 'he would not do that. He would keep it to himself but his heart would be sore (*u suh ndum*). And now that he is dead he will (as a spirit) do good to me.' It was true, commented an elder who had listened to the story; a son who had

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

for him by the lineage of the ancestress who has demanded the erection of the shrine. The diviner-to-be is himself a 'sister's son (*ahəŋ*)' or 'grandson (*yaaŋ*)' of the men who come to perform the ceremony of establishing the shrine. But in addition, a member of his clan who is also an *ahəŋ* of the visitors' clan is deputed to act as intermediary. He goes out to meet the visitors when they approach and escorts them to the homestead of the diviner-to-be; and he acts as spokesman for the latter throughout the ceremony. Thus he formally 'shows' (*paal*) the visitors the beer and the fowls and the goat that have been provided for the ceremony and acts as mediator if there is a disagreement about the amount or quality of these provisions. In the ritual situations that make up the ceremony the visitors sit together in a group and the diviner-to-be and his clansmen sit together in a group. Between the two groups sits the selected *ahəŋ*. As is customary in all such situations, the two parties do not address one another directly. They address the intermediary, who 'passes on (*zaŋ ti*)' what was said to the other party.

Similarly, if a dispute occurs between segments of different clans, for instance over the abduction of a wife, the injured group might send one of their members who is a 'sister's son' of the abductor's clan, with a message of protest and a demand for the return of the wife. An *ahəŋ* is the appropriate person to act as go-between in negotiations between different clans. In the system of clanship ties, it will be remembered, intercalary lineages are sometimes credited with being the agnates of one clan and the 'sister's sons' of the other.[1]

As has been suggested, Tallensi maintain that an *ahəŋ* acting as an intermediary in inter-clan transactions is bound to be equally faithful to both parties. This does not mean that an *ahəŋ* is always equally loyal in sentiment to both his patrilineal and his matrilateral—especially his immediate maternal—kin. Tallensi say that when there is a clash of interests a man will always side with his patrilineal kin while endeavouring, if possible, to refrain from bringing harm on his maternal kin. The behaviour of an *ahəŋ* in war between his and his mother's brother's clan is a case in point.

But there is a belief which suggests that the loyalty of an *ahəŋ* to his mother's brother's lineage may, in some circumstances, outweigh his loyalty to his own clan. In the old days of warfare, it is said, if a man was killed in fighting, there was a way of taking vengeance on the slayer by means of sorcery. The arrow that slew the victim was extracted, and the clan and lineage of the slayer were ascertained. This was easy. Every inner or medial lineage of a clan usually has a distinctive mark (*daan*). One lineage, for example, may tie a tiny guinea-fowl feather at the base of the arrow-head, another may use a particular species of grass. By inquiring from their sororal kinamen in the enemy clan the victim's lineage brothers soon discovered which lineage the slayer

[1] Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, pp. 44 ff.